Celebrating the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy for Lectors and Readers

As a steward of God’s Word in the liturgy, you recognize and appreciate the significance of Scripture in our liturgical celebrations. Our current use and respect for Scripture in liturgy has been significantly shaped by the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the first document produced by the Second Vatican Council.

Published in 1963, this document called for the reform and promotion of the liturgy, to which a “warm and living love for Scripture” was seen as essential (24). Calling for a more representative portion of Scripture to be read over multiple years, the Council decreed that “the treasures of the Bible are to be opened up more lavishly, so that a richer share in God’s word may be provided for the faithful” (CSL, 51). Recognizing the liturgy as an exercise of Christ’s priestly office, which all members of his Body share through Baptism, the Constitution also called for the restoration of the “universal prayer,” or “the prayer of the faithful” (53).

In your ministry as a lector or reader, you exercise an important liturgical function in proclaiming God’s Word and leading the assembly in the Prayer of the Faithful. The reverence and respect with which you perform this office draws all the faithful into deeper communion with Christ through his Word and through the prayer of the Church. In your role, you carry out your baptismal call to active participation in the liturgy, and cooperate in the manifestation of Christ’s presence in his Word, “since it is he himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church” (7).

As we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the publication of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the Church offers gratitude for your contribution and engagement in the liturgy. We encourage you to reflect further on the value of your ministry, and to explore the rich text of this document on your own or with a study group. Finally, we pray that our liturgical celebrations increasingly gather the entire Body of Christ into deep and lasting communion.